

# Washington TECHNOLOGY

## Tech Success: Enterprise architecture made simple

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By JOAB JACKSON

### Headstrong's Census Bureau work bolstered by Computas

While the concept of an enterprise architecture may remain an abstract notion to many agency executives, one integrator is hoping to show managers at the Census Bureau how useful an enterprise architecture can be, mainly by deploying flexible modeling software from Computas NA Inc., Sammamish, Wash.

When the Commerce Department required that its subagencies each develop an architecture, the Census Bureau hired Headstrong Corp., a Washington-based business intelligence consulting firm. Developing an enterprise architecture was not the only goal, though; the June 2001 \$250,000 task order also called for helping Census integrate its architecture into future capital planning processes and other projects and programs.

So the consulting firm used Computas' Metis software, which gives Census a dynamic visual representation of its enterprise architecture and allows employees to pull up data on a program to examine what business or technical requirements are involved in its operation, said Bill Wright, chief executive officer of Computas.

As a result, agencies should be able to constructively use their enterprise architectures -- certainly the intent behind the 1996 Clinger-Cohen Act, which calls for agencies to develop integrated system architectures.

An enterprise architecture is like a blueprint for how an organization runs, showing how its data, computer systems, processes and offices all work together to support the overall mission strategy.

In what Wright calls the "ah-ha! factor," agencies quickly learn that an enterprise architecture is good for more than complying with Clinger-Cohen or Office of Management and Budget requirements. It also can help with many management tasks.

"We are now able to update our EA on the fly and provide information electronically to all managers in the Census Bureau," said Jack Leidich, chief of the bureau's IT architecture office.

Using the enterprise architecture, the bureau's IT security office was able to quickly determine what unsupported software is being used around the organization and decide to support it or eliminate it. The agency has also mapped new initiatives back to its overall strategic plan, Leidich said.

Headstrong has long helped organizations get a handle on its information infrastructures.

"We have worked EA before it was known as EA. Our focus has always been on bridging the gap between technology and business goals," said Patrick Bolton, a principal with Headstrong's public-sector unit.

Bolton said his office had traditionally used, with limited success, standard diagramming tools such as PowerPoint and Visio, both now offered by Microsoft Corp., Redmond, Wash. Such tools can map the relationships among an organization's data models, process models or application systems. But they couldn't link all these models together.

"The true value of EA is not in building these [individual] model views. It's in managing the relationships that go across these work products," Bolton said.

Naturally, Headstrong has made use of the new modeling tools that have been introduced in the past few years by companies such as Popkin Software and Systems Inc., New York, and Ptek Holdings Inc., Atlanta. For the Census job, however, the company went with software from Computas, a relatively unknown enterprise architecture tool provider.

Computas is the U.S. subsidiary of Computas AS of Lysaker, Norway. Formed in 2000 and employing only eight people, the company generated about \$18 million in fiscal 2002, Wright said. The company relies not on a sales force, but on word-of-mouth among integrators and agencies, Wright said. BearingPoint Inc., Cap Gemini Ernst & Young, Electronic Data Systems Corp. and SRA International Inc. have all used the company's software. In addition, Booz Allen Hamilton Inc., Lockheed Martin Corp. and Northrop Grumman Corp. have asked for demonstrations.

Wright won't reveal net income or loss of the company, saying only that it "essentially breaks even" from year to year, namely by investing any profit back into research and development. Such investment seems to have paid off.

"We found Metis to be the most sophisticated of the EA modeling tools," Bolton said. He said Metis provides the easiest way to incorporate new projects into existing models. It also enables executives to interact with an enterprise architecture through a Web browser, drawing on the material from a CD or an intranet.

"For the bureau, we developed a reader's road map, a navigational view that allows multiple users to directly access those particular views helpful to the type of decisions they need to make," Bolton said. For example, an IT manager looks at the architecture from a different viewpoint than a higher-level manager. An information assurance working group can quickly zoom in on the equipment relevant to assessing networking

vulnerabilities.

The software also offers fine-grained access control, so individuals can only see those views that directly relate to their position.

"We want everyone to navigate through the model and find the information as they need to," Bolton said. \*

If you have an innovative solution that you recently installed in a government agency, contact Staff Writer Joab Jackson at [jjackson@postnewsweektech.com](mailto:jjackson@postnewsweektech.com).

Bill Wright, CEO of Computas, says agencies quickly learn that an enterprise architecture can help with many management tasks.  
(Washington Technology Photo by Olivier Douliery)



#### **IT solutions in action**

**Project:** Census Bureau enterprise architecture

**Agency:** Census Bureau

**Partners:** Computas NA Inc., Sammamish, Wash.; and Headstrong Corp., Washington

**Goal:** The Census Bureau needed to develop an enterprise architecture, as per requirements in the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 and the Office of Management and Budget.

**Obstacle:** Developing an enterprise architecture is time-consuming, and the standard project management tools weren't flexible enough to accommodate the complexity of the task.

**Solution:** Headstrong chose software from Computas to develop the enterprise architecture. Computas allowed Headstrong to help the Census Bureau develop a Web-based architecture solution.

**Payoff:** The bureau has an enterprise architecture that it can use to plan future capital expenditures, evaluate security needs and perform other tasks.